

# The Baby that is Being Raised by a

## Spectral Messages from the Other World for the Daily Guidance of Little

EVERY public library and all the book stores have on their shelves one or more novels by "Patience Worth." But there is no such living human being as "Patience Worth"—she is a spook, a spirit, a ghost, a voice from the world beyond the grave it is claimed.

These entertaining and rather well-written novels were dictated by the spirit of "Patience Worth" to Mrs. John B. Curran, of St. Louis. Mrs. Curran solemnly asserts. Mrs. Curran says she wrote every word of these novels and many poems on a ouija board word for word as the spectral voice of "Patience Worth" whispered them in her ear.

But these spooky novels are not what this page

deals with to-day. A more interesting thing is being done by this spook, according to Mrs. Curran and her friends. "Patience Worth" commanded Mrs. Curran, who is childless, to search for a certain red-headed, blue-eyed infant "with dark lines in them," whose father was English and mother was Scotch. Such a baby was found and adopted by Mrs. Curran.

And this child, embodying to-day features and parentage similar to "Patience Worth," who died 250 years ago, is being brought up by its spectral god-mother. Day by day "Patience Worth" gives Mrs. Curran an ouija board message of advice about little Patience Worth Wee whenever it is needed.

## Worth Wee Explained by Mrs. John Curran Says She Was Commanded by a Spirit Forth, Find a Certain Infant and A

SIX years ago Mrs. John H. Curran, of St. Louis, a peculiarly healthy-minded, normal young woman, who is the wife of the former Immigration Commissioner of Missouri, began for amusement to experiment with the ouija board. This peculiar instrument for "receiving messages from the beyond" consists of a flat wooden board, about two feet long by one and a half wide, on which are the letters of the alphabet, the numerals up to ten and the words "Yes," "No," "Don't know" and "Good-by." A little heart-shaped table on three legs is placed on top of the board. The sitters place the board upon their knees, the finger tips of both hands lightly upon the heart-shaped table. After a while an "influence," "spirit" or "spook" begins to move the heart-shaped board, whose narrow end then points to the letters, spelling out the words of its "message." A third person, an observer, acts as amanuensis, taking down the letters as the pointer indicates them.

The "messages" are accounted for by non-spiritualists as an expression of the sub-conscious self of one or both of the sitters; the mysterious movement of the table is supposed to be due to unconscious muscle rhythms of the hands of the sitters.

Whatever the explanation, Mrs. Curran began to hear from someone who signed herself "Patience Worth" and who spelled out upon the board sentences in remarkable English—archaic, a forgotten dialect. This ghostly personage speedily developed into the strongest kind of a personality. She had been, she wrote, a maiden of Dorsetshire, England, who lived about 1650. She was a weaver's daughter, an only child. She wrote that "my thumb is thick from twisting flax" and speaks of delivering fine linen to the "castle folk." Her father left to come to America, and after the death of her mother, Patience says she followed him to the new world. She was then thirty-five. Her new home was in the vicinity of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Near there she was buried, and now, she says, "a tree grows out of my grave."

Soon she began to dictate stories and poems with extraordinary rapidity and facility. The first book published was "Patience Worth." The "Sorry Tale," a story based on the episode of the impenitent thief on the cross, came out in 1916 and "Hope Trueblood," the last book, was a story of old England.

The remarkable literary excellence of these writings attracted widespread attention. Their dialect passed every test of experts. It was proven that Mrs. Curran had no previous knowledge of them, nor had she the education displayed by the communications. Dr. Martin F. Prince, the famous neurologist, diagnosed "Patience" as a sub-conscious personality of Mrs. Curran and offered to rid her of it by hypnotism. Mrs. Curran refused to have "Patience" banished by this means or any other, and scoffs at the sub-conscious theory. Other distinguished scientists studied her case, but with no better results.

For three years the "ghost" of Patience Worth—or whatever it is that responds to that name—had been dictating to Mrs. Curran by means of the ouija board as a concentrator. One book had been printed, another was on the way to the printer. The first book was already promising an excellent sale. Reviews had been flattering and the public was becoming interested.

Then one evening, after the Currans had been discussing this materialistically agreeable result of the manifestations, Patience Worth exploded a bombshell. In the quaint old English words which she uses she announced that inasmuch as there "seemed to be some money in sight," and since it did not belong to the Currans, "but to God," that they should seek "a wee babe that had nothing, nothing and take it and care for it!"

This was, indeed, disconcerting. The Curran house was a well-filled one. There was a grandfather, a mother-in-law, a stepdaughter and the husband and wife. Besides, they had counted upon using the money for themselves.

Patience, however, was determined and explicit. She caustically called attention to the fact that the emoluments of her book did not belong to those who simply took down her dictation, but that as the author and main-spring of the volume the returns from it were hers to do with as she pleased.

"I am a weaver of cloth," said Patience on that night, in the curious imagery she loves to use, "and this cloth I weave is not for him who hath. Thou shalt seek a wee one who hath naught, and thou shalt deliver the goods of me unto its hands, and ye shalt speak its name 'Patience Worth.'"

This was an order, not a request! And to it when the first shock of surprise had worn off the Currans gladly bowed.

"Look ye," the "ghost" went on, "this shall be one who is sorely in need, mind ye! Ye shall whisper sweets unto it, even unto the wee ear that knoweth not thy words, and tell unto it of a fairy dame who shall minister unto it and of Him who sent her. And she shall be the love of all who love me and shall smile sweets unto them."

"But why a girl instead of a boy?" the Currans asked anxiously.

"Ye see," answered Patience cryptically enough, "a

man laddie hath man's cunning, but the wee dames—ah, I know!"

The Currans quite naturally asked about the parentage of the child, its legitimacy and many other important things, not the least of which was a description of it so that they might know when they had found the babe Patience had in mind.

She gave them certain directions—rather vague; told them "not to mind earth's law but God's"—referring unquestionably to the matter of parentage; and to watch close if there were any blood taints, but not to go back further than the grandparents. She wanted the child dressed simply, she concluded, and asked that "about its neck thou shalt hang a sign of Him." The Currans, and rightly it, turned out later, construed this to mean a cross.

"Ye shall be upon the path! E'en now the wee one is waiting," she urged.

So the hunt began for a child who would answer the description. The entire "Patience Worth" clan was sent out on the search. Two physicians were selected to examine it when found for blood taint. Much ground was covered in the next month. There were handicaps—an interesting one the refusal by a certain large St. Louis foundling institution to allow any baby to be taken from there because "Mrs. Curran wrote on a ouija board."

During this search "Patience," who seems to have a strange sense of humor at times, remained silent. Then one night, according to Mrs. Curran, she directed them to cease, telling them there was no use in looking for "one that was not whole," and that in due time certain signs would be given them whereby they would know what to do; adding that if they did continue it would be "like a wolf seeking for a fat fowl to feed well upon when the bird was still in the egg." After this, other weeks passed by without any reference being made by "Patience Worth" to the matter.

Then one morning Mrs. Curran met an old friend whom she had not seen for years, and in the course of a ride together told some of the details of the quest for the baby. The friend, in return, told of a young wife who was about to become a mother, who was practically homeless and friendless, and whose husband had been killed some time before in a mill accident. That night a message from "Patience Worth" indicated that at last the Currans were on the right track and that which she had prophesied was about to occur.

The next day Mrs. Curran went to see this woman, who was very ill. A fever of preparation began immediately. Layette cradle, perambulator, lawyers, adoption papers—everything was made ready just as though the thing were already settled. Seemingly the possibility that the expected child might be a boy was never for a moment considered.

The mother-to-be signed the adoption papers, but held them under the agreement that if she lived she was to keep the expected child, but that if she died, then the Currans were to have the baby.

Six weeks later, as Mrs. Curran was writing with "Patience" upon the now well-known "Sorry Tale," the "ghost" stopped the dictation at exactly nine o'clock. "This be enough," she wrote, and the board became quiet.

Everyone was on tip-toe with expectation. It had been arranged that they should be called by phone at ten o'clock for news of the birth, which had been imminent for some hours.

On the hour the telephone rang and word came that a girl child had been born at exactly the moment when "Patience" had stopped the writing!

When the child was seen it had all the marks that were expected. Its hair was red as "Patience Worth" had described her own. It had blue eyes with dark lines in them, like those which "Patience" had said she possessed when on earth. Its parentage was the same as "Patience," whose father, she had said, was English and whose mother was Scotch.

The baby's mother died four days later and the child was legally adopted by the Currans acting for "Patience Worth." She was christened as Patience Worth Wee Curran on November 26, 1916, the Rev. George Wales King, a prominent St. Louis minister, officiating. Mrs. Charles H. McKee, an equally well-known social leader, is her godmother, and Casper S. Yost, editor of one of St. Louis' leading newspapers, is her godfather, with Dr. and Mrs. Major F. E. Woodruff her sponsors.

The "ghost" having thus picked out her child, having watched over its entrance into this world, having given all essential directions for its discovery, was it not to be expected that she would now take a most active part, just like any real flesh-and-blood mother, in bringing it up?

"Patience" soon answered this question in no uncertain way. It was clear, that she intended to have a finger in every detail—clothing, feeding, education, play and all elements of the child's life. And here must be raised the interesting question of just what relationship "Patience Worth" claims to little Patience Worth Wee Curran. Does she assume to be its actual mother?

Even admitting that there is such a disembodied entity as "Patience Worth," what possible physical influence could a "ghost" of a woman dead, on her own account, almost three hundred years have upon the



Three-year-old Patience Worth Wee, from recent photograph of the ghost-guided little one in Forest Park, St. Louis. She is wearing the clothing ordered by her "spirit mother."